

Message Text

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47

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DODE-00 SP-02 PRS-01 /037 W

----- 028476

R 031501Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5515

INFO CINCUSNAVEUR

COMSIXTHFLT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USDAO RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1783

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, IT, MO

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN OBSERVERS AT SIXTH FLEET EXERCISE IN ITALY

REF: (A) CINCUSNAVEUR 030029Z FEB 76 (NOTAL) (B) COMSIXTFLT
311504Z JAN 76 (NOTAL)

1. REF A REQUESTED EMBASSY ROME CONCURRENCE IN SIXTH FLEET INVITATION TO MOROCCAN MARINE CORPS OFFICER TO OBSERVE EXERCISE PHIBLEX 8-76 SCHEDULED FOR 25 FEB THROUGH 1 MARCH AT PIAN DI SPILLE.

2. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT SCENARIO FOR THIS EXERCISE INVOLVES EVACUATION OF ENDANGERED U.S. CITIZENS. EMBASSY ALSO UNDERSTANDS THAT IT IS A UNILATERAL SIXTH FLEET EXERCISE INVOLVING NO FOREIGN PARTICIPATION. AS HOST GOVERNMENT, ITALIAN MOD WILL, HOWEVER, PARTICIPATE IN PLANNING MEETING WEEK OF FEB 9 AND WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE EXERCISE. ASIDE FROM ABOVE MENTIONED MOROCCAN, AND THE ITALIANS, NO OTHER FOREIGN OBSERVERS WOULD BE INVITED.

3. WHILE THIRD COUNTRY -- ESPECIALLY NON-NATO -- OBSERVERS
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ARE NOT ROUTINELY INVITED TO U.S. EXERCISES IN ITALY, AS

RECENTLY AS LAST SUMMER THE ITALIAN MOD DID NOT OBJECT TO PRESENCE OF SPANISH OFFICERS AT AN EXERCISE. BUT, GIVEN PRESENT HEATED STATE OF MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONS AND SOMEWHAT INCREASED MEDIA ATTENTION TO THE AREA, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GOI WOULD PREFER MOROCCAN NOT, RPT NOT, BE INVITED AT THIS TIME OUT OF FEAR OF POSSIBLE NEGATIVE PRESS SPECULATION.

4. EMBASSY INVITES VIEWS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY RABAT ON POSSIBLE UTILITY OF THIS GESTURE WHEN BALANCED AGAINST SLIGHT RISK OF MEDIA BACKFIRE HERE. VOLPE

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NNN

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